

FIGURE EIGHTS, RECIPROCAL MOVEMENT, AND KAYAKING



Figure-eight patterns involve reciprocal movement about a central point. With reciprocity, where there is a push, there is an offsetting pull. Many activities incorporate sequential, reciprocal motions. For instance, when you walk with arm swings, one arm swings forward while the opposite leg swings back. There is a push and a pull to the rhythm around the core or trunk. Reciprocal movements help transfer momentum during gait.

For ABLE Bodies training, some figure-eight patterns are practiced by walking in a figure-eight path. Others, such as seated kayaking, are practiced from a chair. Controlling large reciprocal forces is a part of the balance challenge. This series of activities provides good balance training for everyday living. Kayaking is an excellent choice for individuals with Parkinson's Disease. The flowing, body-twisting motions are helpful for easing rigidity.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Uses and improves figure-eight movements.
- ⦿ Enhances balance control for opposing motions.
- ⦿ Practices sequential everyday movements.

Set It Up »

Expect that you might use poles or sticks for kayaking, sunglasses or heads-up glasses to reduce vision, and agility poles or chairs to set a kayaking course.

How to Do It »

This series of activities can be progressed from seated to standing to seated on an agility disc or a ball to moving, depending on which level is an appropriate challenge for your participants.

Kayaking Arms

To teach this arm pattern, give participants a lightweight pole to use as their kayak pole. The goal is to teach them to kayak with their arms and shoulders using a dip-turn-lift motion. Ideally, the upper body will turn in the opposite direction of the knees and head. Try using these cues:

- ⦿ Sit Tall on your chair with your torso stabilized and your feet flat on the floor. Knees face forward. Hold your pole in both hands, palms facing down.
- ⦿ Lift the pole to shoulder height.
- ⦿ Dip the pole low to one side and pull the stroke down and back.
- ⦿ Lift again to center.
- ⦿ Kayak to the other side and return to center.
- ⦿ Begin to link strokes and develop a rhythm.
- ⦿ Keep going until you've completed sets of 8 to 12 strokes.

Kayaking Knees

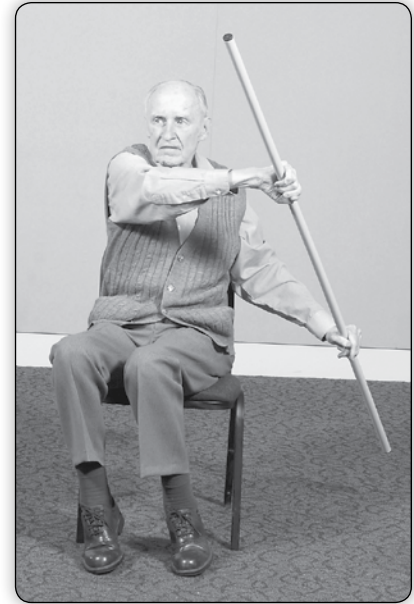
When participants kayak with their arms on their right side, have them point their knees left.

- Paddle on right, knees point left
- Paddle on left, knees point right

Kayaking Head

When the arms dip and row to the right, have participants turn knees AND head opposite. Try these cues:

- Dip the pole left.
- Head and knees push right. Finish kayak stroke on left.
- Dip right.
- Head and knees push left. Finish kayak stroke on right.
- Link the moves.
- Develop a rhythm.
- Say the Pledge of Allegiance while kayaking (Or another dual task).
- Sit with feet tandem and heels lifted.



Kayaking While Walking

This is a difficult activity for most. Be cautious and stay close by when doing this moving activity. Participants should pretend they are kayaking down the river.

- Start with Kayaking Arms while standing (for balance support, one leg should touch the back of their chair).
- Participants should maintain good core stability.
- When they are ready and you are close by, have them begin walking and kayaking.
- Walk in a straight line first.
- Then have them walk through your Kayak course, using a figure 8 pattern.

Give It More Balance »

- Add sunglasses or heads-up glasses, or dim the lights.
- Sit on a balance disc.
- Kayak through the course with Heads-up glasses on.
- Kayaking is a natural addition to River Fun.

Keep It Safe »

These movements can be tiring. Let participants choose their challenge. If anyone's back hurts, that person should stop and make some adjustments, such as doing smaller motions. For standing and walking variations, be near the participants.

Live It »

Offsetting motions can cause little perturbations that participants can learn to control with rhythmic motions and counter rotations. Practicing will help improve gait, balance confidence, and other everyday skills.